



MARKET REPORT G A M I N G

Several more fantasy creations are in the works. They include the New York-New York Hotel & Casino, a joint venture between MGM Grand and Primadonna Resorts. Scheduled to open late this year, the \$350 million resort will include a replica of the Manhattan skyline, a 300-ft.-long model of the Brooklyn Bridge to serve as a pedestrian walkway, replicas of Radio City Music Hall, the Guggenheim Museum, and Museum of Modern Art, 10 high-rises housing 2,116 guest rooms and suites and a roller coaster circling the property.

BALLY ENTERTAINMENT Corp. is also getting into the act with its Paris Casino-Resort, a \$420 million strip property with replicas of the Arc de Triomphe, Champs-Elysees, the Paris Opera House, Seine River and Eiffel Tower.

BALLY'S NEW COMPLEX

WILL FEATURE

REPLICAS OF THE ARC

DE TRIOMPHE AND THE

EIFFEL TOWER.

a working winery and gondola rides, shopping complex and nine themed restaurants.

Theming, of course, isn't new in Las Vegas. It began with the Flamingo Hotel, which emphasized the city's desert locale, and reached its first culmination, according to some observers, in 1966 with Caesars Palace, which introduced a fantasy setting of Imperial Rome. Other variations on non-local themes followed, such as Circus Circus, which brought big-top entertainment to the casino floor.

The next stage was ushered in by The Mirage in 1989, which went a step further toward an all-encompassing entertainment focus. In the Mirage and the even more elaborate theme-park properties that have followed, dining is very much part of the total entertainment package.

"What's happening outside the casino industry is having a more dramatic impact on foodservice inside casinos than the other way around—that is, restaurants are becoming much more entertainment focused," says Alan Feldman, vice president of public affairs for Mirage Resorts.

"In the past," says Feldman, "we had to create our own theater in restaurants. Now, more branded concepts are coming in that provide their own 'dining as theater' aspect, such as California Pizza Kitchen."

The one area outside restaurants have not yet penetrated, Feldman adds, is providing upscale dining for the casinos' best customers. Although the Mirage embraced CPK as its highest-profile dining attraction, its five gourmet rooms, as well as the upscale restaurants at the company's Golden Nugget and Treasure Island properties, are all owned and operated internally.

This will change when Mirage Resorts opens its next extravaganza, the \$1.1 billion, 3,000-room luxury casino resort Bellagio in late 1997 or early 1998. It will boast branches of New York's Le Cirque and Nobu among its fine-dining options.

"I think it's a natural evolution of today's casino foodservice trends," says Feldman. "Those restaurants have tremendous cachet. To be able to offer them in combination for our customers will be very attractive."

WITH 5,000 ROOMS AND suites, compared to the Mirage's 3,000, and an amusement park and other family-friendly entertainment contrasting with the Mirage's more adult-centered attractions, the MGM Grand's foodservice options "need to cover a broader-based segment of the market than some of its competitors," says MGM Grand's senior vice president of hotel operations, Greg Saunders.

"We see ourselves as being in the entertainment business," he says and adds, "Food is very much a part of that."

"I don't think you can be successful in this market today if you try to do stand-alone food concepts, without an entertainment component," Saunders says.

"When you look at the types of

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